Right to land to the forest dwelling STs

84. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 provides right to land to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes under certain conditions;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the above tribals would have any right on the commercial use of the above land;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether the above Bill is denying many freedoms to the tribals guranteed in the Constitution; and

(g) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) to (g) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been mandated to formulate a comprehensive Central Legislation to redress the historical injustice done to forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes by providing for clear assertion of their legal rights on land and other traditional forest rights. This Ministry has prepared a draft "The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005", to provide a legislative frame for recognition of the aforementioned rights, in consultation with the concerned Ministries, including the Ministry of Law & Justice.

The proposed Bill seeks to recognize such rights on land, minor forest produce, etc. for bona fide livelihood needs of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes. The Bill was posted on the website of the Ministry seeking comments of the public and all stakeholders till 10.7.05 The proposed Bill is still a tentative draft Bill and to be finalized as per the established procedure taking views and comments received from the stakeholdes into consideration.